



**Calochortus
uniflorus flowers**

Last week I showed you a few pictures of Calochortus uniflorus; these two pictures show some of the variation that I am getting from seed raised plants.

**Calochortus
uniflorus**

The first form of this easy bulb that I had and still grow has no darker marking in the centre of the flower and none of the seedlings from that original plant produced a flower with such a beautiful contrasting dark blotch.

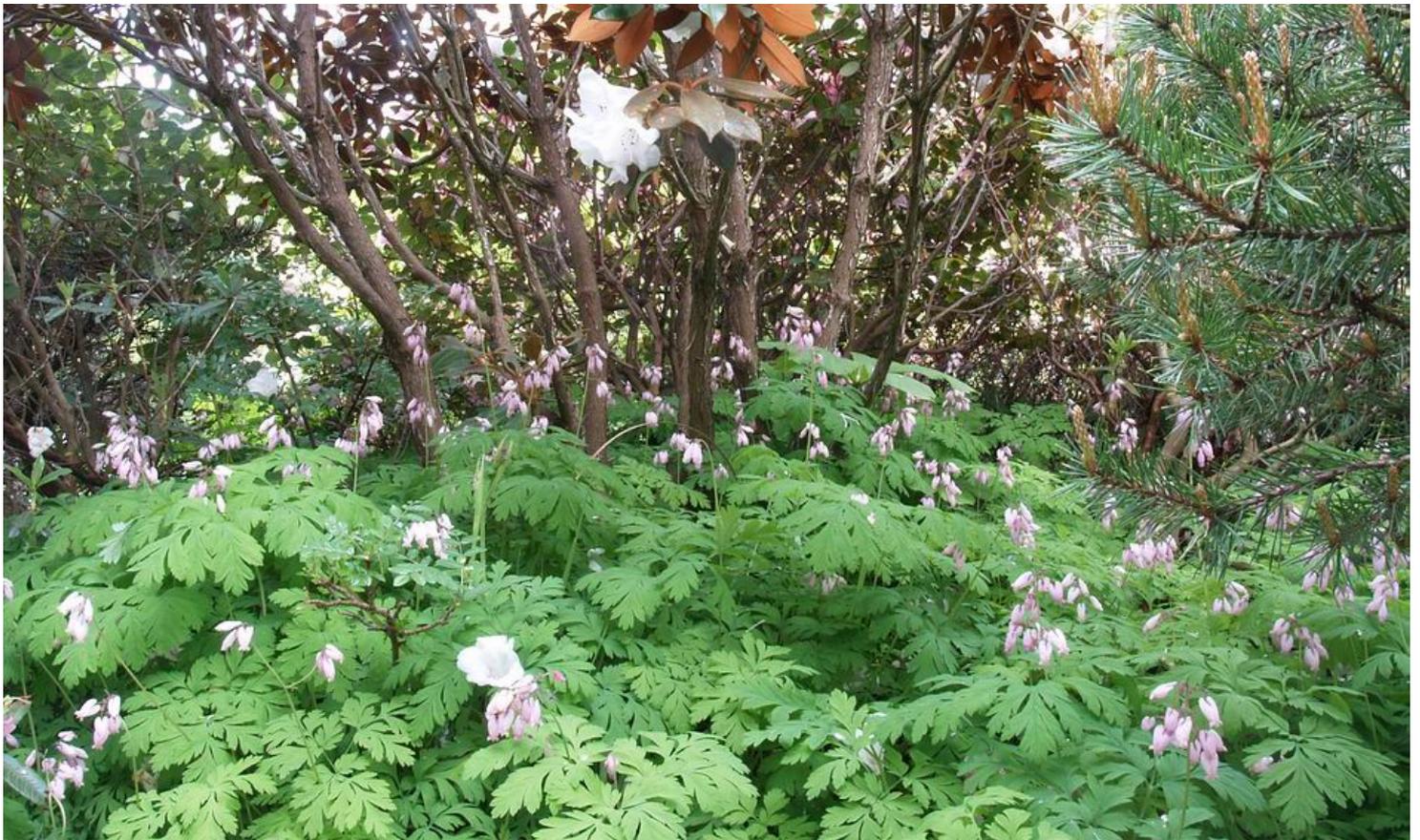
Then I got sent some seeds from Canada and ever since then I am getting a lovely range of variations with dark markings like these.





Storing seeds in dry sand

Here is a reminder of how I store many of the bulb seeds until I sow them, ideally in late August or September. The seeds that I store this way include Narcissus, Crocus, Sternbergia, Tecophilaea etc. and I believe that placing them in small polythene packets with some dry sand and storing them in a stable condition through our cool wet summer best replicates what happens to them in the wild. The excellent germination results that I get from my own seed stored this way certainly confirms to me that this is the best way.



Dicentra formosa

Walking around the garden to see what else I can show in this week's Bulb Log I find some plants that can be very vigorous and invasive like this Dicentra. I had to remove some other Dicentra from a bulb bed last autumn as it was taking over but here under the Rhododendrons, in the front garden which is now a shrubbery, it is perfectly at home and I am happy to see it running about in the deep shade..



Hyacinthoides hispanica

Bluebells are another bulb that can become invasive if you are growing them along side other less vigorous bulbs or plants because they increase quickly by division and seed. In a wood they can look wonderful; forming blue carpets. I have tried to replicate this effect by confining them to this small area under a thirty plus year old *Acer dissectum* which is only about one meter high and covers an area two meters around like a large umbrella. Early in the spring there are a number of *Eranthis*, *Galanthus*, *Narcissus* and *Erythroniums* that have all self-seeded into this area but once the *Acer* comes into leaf not much will grow there except these bluebells.

Because many have self sown there is a range of colours from deep blue through to pale blue, dirty pinks – which I do not like and try and pull out – to some pure whites like the one in the middle of this pic.

A number of whites through a population of mixed colours always lifts the effect to a higher level.





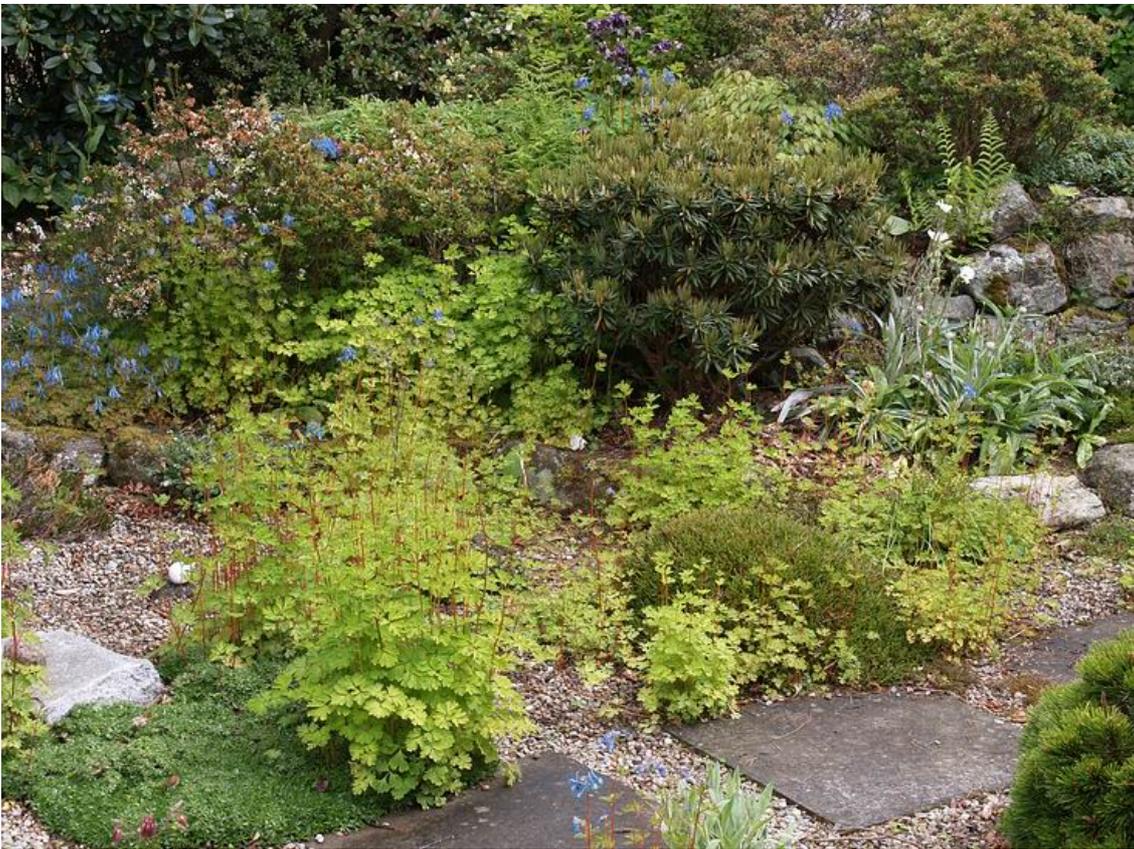
Colchicum leaves with seed pods

Another plant that is often not welcome in many peoples gardens are the larger Colchicums and all because they see them as having large leaves. What I can never understand is that many of these same people are growing plants like Hostas and Iris siberica both of which have large leaves and only fleeting flowers not to mention large hungry root systems that make it difficult to have companion plants sharing the same space. This is not the case with Colchicums – as long as you choose plants that flower early in the spring before the colchicum leaves appear, in the summer after the leaves have gone or are tall enough to grow above the leaves you can have a host of happy companions. I cannot remember ever seeing so may fat looking seed pods on the larger Colchicums as there are this year. It will be interesting to see if they are full of seeds of just false expectation - I hope for seeds.



Corydalis cashmeriana seed pods

Another plant that has more seed pods on than usual is Corydalis cashmeriana and again I hope that they contain fertile seeds as it will be good to get more clones of this plants in our garden as it is mostly just one clone that we have multiplied up by annual division.



Corydalis seedlings

I just love it when plants are happy enough to seed themselves around our garden like these Corydalis hybrids growing in the gravel paths. They just get on with it and all we need to do is move the ones that are in the way or split off some of the better forms to plant elsewhere.



Corydalis hybrid

This nice blue flowered hybrid has put itself in a bed beside a fern making a very attractive combination.



Corydalis smithiana

We raised *Corydalis smithiana* from the ACE expedition in the 1990's and it stayed around for a few years but then disappeared – I thought we had lost it. However it has reappeared after an absence of at least six years in this humus bed that we did some work on over the last two years. First we cut back some small *Rhododendrons* that had taken over and were not looking their best then we planted some young plants into the reclaimed space. All the disturbance of the soil and the exposure to more light must have triggered some long dormant seeds to germinate. It is very interesting to learn that these seeds can survive for a number of years in the ground.



Corydalis smithiana

This detailed picture show that *Corydalis smithiana* sets abundant seed and provided the conditions that it falls onto are good we should not be without it again.

I will scatter some seeds into a number of different areas to ensure its continues to flower every year.

It is a biennial so needs to be grown from seed on a regular basis.



Corydalis sp.

I have no idea at all what this Corydalis species is.

I got some plants from Peter Korn a few years ago and they flowered and died but not before they set copious quantities of seeds.

I now have a number of flowering plants around the garden.

It is not the most attractive of the corydalis but an interesting species to have.

I suspect that it too is a biennial.



Dactylorhiza clump

As I walk around the garden I am noticing a number of clumps of Dactylorhiza which, later this year just as the flowers are fading, will need to be split. These are all plants that have self seeded, mostly into troughs. I have split them when they are up to flowering sized and getting too crowded for the trough.



I divide them as the flowers are fading because I can greatly increase the stock by removing the new bulbs and replanting the stem complete with fading flowers and old bulb which will grow yet more offsets before it dies back completely. I have showed this before and here is a box that I planted the old stems in last August showing all these extra plants that I have stimulated the plant to produce.



Dactylorhiza 'Eskimo Nell'

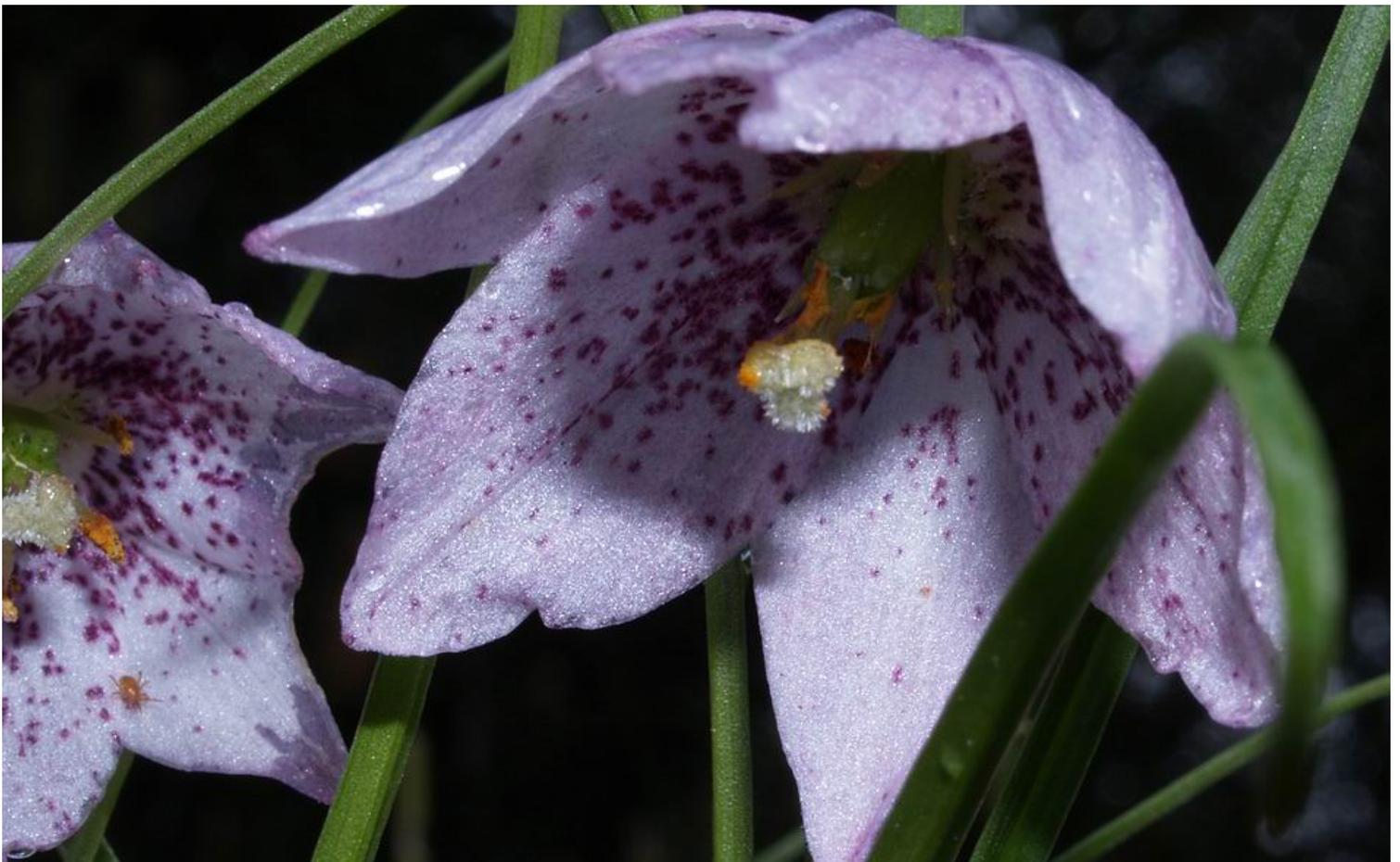
The plain *Dactylorhiza* leaves you can see here in the middle ground of this photo are of 'Eskimo Nell' and these are also the result of planting the old stems after I had removed the new young bulbs. Some of the stems have produced three bonus plants and at least one of them has achieved flowering size already – the rest will flower next year.



Lilium nanum

There are not too many bulbs in flower in the garden just now but a number of lilies are in growth.

Always among the first of the lilies is the tiny *Lilium nanum*, only around 15 to 18 cms high.



Lilium nanum

Despite being among the smallest of the lilies it is still very beautiful – a perfect miniature.